WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of storing data in a memory of a computer, comprising:
creating a persistent in-memory database table; and
loading data into the in-memory database table.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the data is loaded from a relational data store.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the in-memory database table is user-defined.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling multiple users to share access to the in-memory database table.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising dropping the in-memory database table upon receipt of a drop table command.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising dropping the in-memory database table upon system shutdown.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a syntax for creating the in-memory database table.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising limiting access to the in-memory database table.

9. An apparatus for storing data, comprising:
a computer having a memory and connected to a data store;
one or more computer programs, performed by the computer, for creating a persistent in-memory database table and loading data into the in-memory database table.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the data is loaded from a relational data store.

11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the in-memory database table is user-defined.

12. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising enabling multiple users to share access to the in-memory database table.

13. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising dropping the in-memory database table upon receipt of a drop table command.

14. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising dropping the in-memory database table upon system shutdown.

15. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising providing a syntax for creating the in-memory database table.

16. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising limiting access to the in-memory database table.

17. An article of manufacture comprising a program storage medium readable by a computer and embodying one or more instructions executable by the computer to store data in a memory of a computer, comprising:

creating a persistent in-memory database table; and

loading data into the in-memory database table.

18. The article of manufacture of claim 17, wherein the data is loaded from a relational data store.

19. The article of manufacture of claim 17, wherein the in-memory database table is user-defined.

20. The article of manufacture of claim 17, further comprising enabling multiple users to share access to the in-memory database table.

21. The article of manufacture of claim 17, further comprising dropping the in-memory database table upon receipt of a drop table command.

22. The article of manufacture of claim 17, further comprising dropping the in-memory database table upon system shutdown.

23. The article of manufacture of claim 17, further comprising providing a syntax for creating the in-memory database table.

24. The article of manufacture of claim 17, further comprising limiting access to the in-memory database table.

25. A method of locating data in a memory of a computer, comprising:

receiving a search request specifying a number of results to be retrieved from a desired starting point;

locating the data in an in-memory database table; and

returning the specified number of results from a desired starting point.

26. The method of claim 25, further comprising parsing the search request to identify search terms.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising locating stored descriptors that correspond to the search terms using a high speed index.

28. The method of claim 27, further comprising mapping the stored descriptors to location information in a header area of the in-memory database table.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising using the location information to retrieve data.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the data is retrieved from a data area of the in-memory database table.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the data is retrieved from a relational data store.

32. The method of claim 25, wherein the results are in pre-sorted order.

33. The method of claim 25, wherein the results are pre-joined.

34. An apparatus for locating data, comprising:

a computer having a memory and connected to a data store;

one or more computer programs, performed by the computer, for receiving a search request specifying a number of results to be retrieved from a desired starting point, locating the data in an in-memory database table, and returning the specified number of results from a desired starting point.

35. The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising parsing the search request to identify search terms.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, further comprising locating stored descriptors that correspond to the search terms using a high speed index.

37. The apparatus of claim 36, further comprising mapping the stored descriptors to location information in a header area of the in-memory database table.

38. The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising using the location information to retrieve data.

39. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the data is retrieved from a data area of the in-memory database table.

40. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the data is retrieved from a relational data store.

41. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the results are in pre-sorted order.

42. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the results are pre-joined.

43. An article of manufacture comprising a program storage medium readable by a computer and embodying one or more instructions executable by the computer to locate data in a memory of a computer, comprising:

receiving a search request specifying a number of results to be retrieved from a desired starting point;

locating the data in an in-memory database table; and

returning the specified number of results from a desired starting point.

44. The article of manufacture of claim 43, further comprising parsing the search request to identify search terms.

45. The article of manufacture of claim 44, further comprising locating stored descriptors that correspond to the search terms using a high speed index.

46. The article of manufacture of claim 45, further comprising mapping the stored descriptors to location information in a header area of the in-memory database table.

47. The article of manufacture of claim 46, further comprising using the location information to retrieve data.

48. The article of manufacture of claim 47, wherein the data is retrieved from a data area of the in-memory database table.

49. The article of manufacture of claim 47, wherein the data is retrieved from a relational data store.

50. The article of manufacture of claim 43, wherein the results are in pre-sorted order.

51. The article of manufacture of claim 43, wherein the results are pre-joined.

52. A method for retrieving data from an in-memory database table stored at a computer, comprising:

retrieving stored descriptors corresponding to search terms in a search request;

mapping the stored descriptors to location information in a header area of an in-memory database table; and

using the location information to retrieve data.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the location information indicates that data to be retrieved is in a data area of the in-memory database table.

54. The method of claim 52, wherein the location information indicates that data to be retrieved is in a relational data store.

55. An apparatus for retrieving data from an in-memory database table, comprising:

a computer having a memory storing the in-memory database table, wherein the computer is connected to a data store;

one or more computer programs, performed by the computer, for retrieving stored descriptors corresponding to search terms in a search request, mapping the stored descriptors to location information in a header area of an in-memory database table, and using the location information to retrieve data.

56. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the location information indicates that data to be retrieved is in a data area of the in-memory database table.

57. The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the location information indicates that data to be retrieved is in a relational data store.

58. An article of manufacture comprising a program storage medium readable by a computer and embodying one or more instructions executable by the computer to retrieve data from an in-memory database table stored at a computer, comprising:

retrieving stored descriptors corresponding to search terms in a search request;

mapping the stored descriptors to location information in a header area of an in-memory database table; and

using the location information to retrieve data.

59. The article of manufacture of claim 58, wherein the location information indicates that data to be retrieved is in a data area of the in-memory database table.

60. The article of manufacture of claim 58, wherein the location information indicates that data to be retrieved is in a relational data store.

61. A method of updating data in a memory of a computer, comprising:

receiving an update request to update data that is accessed via an in-memory database table; and

updating the data accessed via the in-memory database table.

62. The method of claim 61, further comprising updating a relational data store.

63. The method of claim 61, further comprising updating a high speed index used to access the in-memory database table.

64. The method of claim 63, further comprising modifying stored descriptors in the high speed index to correspond to updates to the in-memory database table.

65. The method of claim 61, further comprising modifying location information of a header area of the in-memory database table to correspond to updates to the in-memory database table.

66. An apparatus for updating data, comprising:

a computer having a memory and connected to a data store;

one or more computer programs, performed by the computer, for receiving an update request to update data that is accessed via an in-memory database table and updating the data accessed via the in-memory database table.

67. The apparatus of claim 66, further comprising updating a relational data store.

68. The apparatus of claim 66, further comprising updating a high speed index used to access the in-memory database table.

69. The apparatus of claim 68, further comprising modifying stored descriptors in the high speed index to correspond to updates to the in-memory database table.

70. The apparatus of claim 66, further comprising modifying location information of a header area of the in-memory database table to correspond to updates to the in-memory database table.

71. An article of manufacture comprising a program storage medium readable by a computer and embodying one or more instructions executable by the computer to update data in a memory of a computer, comprising:

receiving an update request to update data that is accessed via an in-memory database table; and

updating the data accessed via the in-memory database table.

72. The article of manufacture of claim 71, further comprising updating a relational data store.

73. The article of manufacture of claim 71, further comprising updating a high speed index used to access the in-memory database table.

74. The article of manufacture of claim 73, further comprising modifying stored descriptors in the high speed index to correspond to updates to the in-memory database table.

75. The article of manufacture of claim 71, further comprising modifying location information of a header area of the in-memory database table to correspond to updates to the in-memory database table.